

from I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou
Selection Test B

Critical Reading Identify the letter of the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

- ___ 1. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, what work did Momma do before she built the Store?
- A. She managed the barber shop.
 - B. She baked for the town restaurant.
 - C. She sold lunches to local workmen.
 - D. She was a chef.
- ___ 2. What can you conclude from the following list of items found at the Store in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*?
- . . . mash for hogs, corn for chickens, coal oil for lamps, light bulbs for the wealthy . . .
- A. Supplies could be costly.
 - B. Hogs preferred a certain brand of food.
 - C. Not everyone had electricity.
 - D. Most people shopped only once a month.
- ___ 3. Why does the author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* enjoy estimating the weight of a sack of flour before weighing it?
- A. The customers are amazed at her ability.
 - B. She avoids using messy equipment.
 - C. She likes the texture of the grain.
 - D. Her grandmother is impressed.
- ___ 4. What is “the fine” when the author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* estimates weights inaccurately?
- A. a cut in her salary
 - B. washing the dinner dishes
 - C. no chocolate drops
 - D. a quarter
- ___ 5. What feeling for her grandmother does the author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* convey in her descriptions?
- A. impatience
 - B. respect
 - C. dislike
 - D. protectiveness
- ___ 6. What main idea about the Store does this quotation from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* support?
- . . . it looked like an unopened present from a stranger.
- A. The author’s family enjoyed holidays.
 - B. The Store welcomed travelers.
 - C. The author found the Store exciting.
 - D. The Store was exceptionally orderly.

- ___ 7. What main idea of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is supported by the following quotation?
- I wanted to gobble up the room entire and take it to Bailey, who would help me analyze and enjoy it.
- A. The author brags about her adventures.
 - B. The author cannot think for herself.
 - C. The author is jealous of Bailey.
 - D. The author is close to Bailey.
- ___ 8. Why does Mrs. Flowers tell Maya Angelou to be “understanding of illiteracy”?
- A. Mrs. Flowers is illiterate.
 - B. The author has trouble reading.
 - C. Some people who cannot read are smart.
 - D. She is teaching the author new words.
- ___ 9. Why does Mrs. Flowers encourage the author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* to listen to “mother wit”?
- A. Mrs. Flowers thinks that wisdom can be passed down through generations.
 - B. Mrs. Flowers thinks that a sense of humor is important in life.
 - C. Mrs. Flowers thinks the author spends too much time alone reading.
 - D. Mrs. Flowers thinks the author should be more obedient at home.
- ___ 10. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, how does the author react when Mrs. Flowers reads a passage from *A Tale of Two Cities*?
- A. She barely recognizes the familiar lines.
 - B. Mrs. Flowers’s voice frightens her.
 - C. She asks Mrs. Flowers to read more.
 - D. She knows she will become a writer.
- ___ 11. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, explain Mrs. Flowers’s statement “Words mean more than what is set down on paper.”
- A. A word cannot have an exact meaning.
 - B. Speech brings additional life to words.
 - C. One cannot read without a dictionary.
 - D. There are many languages in the world.
- ___ 12. Why does Mrs. Flowers give the author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* a book of poems?
- A. Mrs. Flowers had already read the book
 - B. Mrs. Flowers expects the author to recite a poem on her next visit.
 - C. Mrs. Flowers suggests that the author write a poem.
 - D. Mrs. Flowers wants the author to read aloud to her grandmother.
- ___ 13. Which detail about Mrs. Flowers seems most important to the author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*?
- A. her calm and gentle nature
 - B. her fine dresses and hats
 - C. her kindness and encouragement
 - D. her loyalty to the author’s grandmother

- ___ 14. How does the author of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* feel after her visit with Mrs. Flowers?
- A. liked
 - B. embarrassed
 - C. uneducated
 - D. hungry
- ___ 15. What does Maya Angelou mean when she says that Mrs. Flowers “threw me my first lifeline”?
- A. Mrs. Flowers gave her a reason to live.
 - B. Mrs. Flowers helped her learn to swim.
 - C. Mrs. Flowers told her fortune.
 - D. Mrs. Flowers became a close friend.

Vocabulary and Grammar

- ___ 16. Which word or phrase is closest in meaning to *infuse*?
- A. put into
 - B. reject
 - C. light
 - D. ask
- ___ 17. An adverb can modify a
- A. noun.
 - B. verb.
 - C. preposition.
 - D. pronoun.
- ___ 18. Which word in the following sentence is an adverb?
- Our car swerved dangerously close to the cliff on the narrow road.
- A. swerved
 - B. dangerously
 - C. cliff
 - D. narrow
- ___ 19. Which word is closest in meaning to *fiscal*?
- A. rational
 - B. mobile
 - C. financial
 - D. miraculous

Essay

20. You have read two excerpts from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The first excerpt is the author’s memories of her family’s store. The second excerpt is her memory of an experience with one person. In a brief essay, summarize each excerpt. Be sure to include examples in your summaries. Then, propose a title for each excerpt.
21. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the Store plays such an important part in the life of the town that the author says it is at the center of activities. In a brief essay, describe ways in which the Store contributes to the well-being of the townspeople. Use examples from the selection to support your answer.
22. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Mrs. Flowers has a significant effect on the author. Write an essay in which you describe the author’s thoughts and feelings during her visit with Mrs. Flowers. Then, explain what you think the author learns from the older woman.